

Many

Rosalie: a Comedy in
One Act: by Max
Maurey: Translated by
Barrett H. Clark

Samuel French: Publisher

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MAX MAUREY

Max Maurey, author of a number of clever one-act plays and a few of greater length, is the director of the Grand Guignol Theater in Paris. The present comedy was first presented at that place. M. Maurey has also made a number of adaptations, chief among which is a dramatization of "David Copperfield" which enjoyed a successful run at the Odéon.

"Rosalie" requires only the simplest sort of interior setting. The costumes are modern and described at sufficient length in the stage-directions.

PERSONS IN THE PLAY

ROSALIE

MONSIEUR BOL

MADAME BOL

ROSALIE *the maid*

SCENE: *The BOLS' parlor, Paris.*

TIME: *The present.*

ROSALIE

SCENE: *A small, modestly-furnished parlor. Entrances center and left. Mantel-piece left of center entrance. Sofa down-stage left; a table and a chair down stage right; a writing desk right; window up stage right. During the entire act MONSIEUR BOL never sits down.*

MONSIEUR BOL. (*In evening clothes; as the curtain rises, he is just lighting the last candle in a candelabrum on the mantel-piece*) Half an hour and he'll be here!

MADAME BOL. (*Putting flowers in a vase on the table*) I only hope he'll be on time!

MONSIEUR BOL. He's always on time. At college, I remember it was a common saying: "As punctual as Poulot."—He's *never* a second late—never. When he says, "I'll be there at eight o'clock," on the stroke of eight—Pff—there's your Poulot! He's a human chronometer.

MADAME BOL. (*Slightly nervous*) But—is he nice?

MONSIEUR BOL. Charming. You'll see. Not at all proud; really charming. Think of it! It was fifteen years since we'd seen one another. Why, he recognized me in a second. "My poor fellow," he said, "how changed you are! How old you look!"

MADAME BOL. Oh, that wasn't very nice of him!

MONSIEUR BOL. Not very nice? You must be crazy, Eulalie. Perhaps it wouldn't have been very nice coming from someone else, but from M. Poulot the rich M. Poulot, with an income of I don't know how many thousands,—it was most friendly—I repeat, most friendly.

MADAME BOL. I understand.

MONSIEUR BOL. We must endeavor to supplement our modest little repast this evening with what extras in the way of domestic attractions we are able to provide. When Poulot leaves here this evening, he must say to himself: "I never visited a more hospitable home, nor saw a more charming woman than Madame Bol, nor a more intelligent man than Monsieur Bol." In short, we must entertain him in royal fashion. Be as agreeable as possible.

MADAME BOL. My dear Hippolyte, I am used to receiving company. Agreeable! Be agreeable! I don't know how *not* to be.

MONSIEUR BOL. Of course!—And above all, let's not argue! See? Is everything ready?

MADAME BOL. Everything! The tea is in the teapot; the little cakes are on the dishes; I even scattered in a few glacé fruits.

MONSIEUR BOL. Splendid! That's a good idea.

MADAME BOL. I tell you, when I once make up my mind, I can receive as well as anybody.

MONSIEUR BOL. Good!—Don't forget to have the water boiling hot—tea is undrinkable when it is not boiling hot.

MADAME BOL. I told Rosalie.

MONSIEUR BOL. Did you give her a clean apron?

MADAME BOL. Rosalie?

MONSIEUR BOL. Yes.

MADAME BOL. Not yet.

MONSIEUR BOL. Good Lord! In a quarter of an hour Poulot will be here!

MADAME BOL. We have plenty of time. Don't you worry about Rosalie. I'll give her a clean apron just before eight. She's so careless, she'd muss it in a second.

MONSIEUR BOL. Perhaps you're right. But it might be a good idea to bring her in.

MADAME BOL. In a minute, my dear! I've explained everything to her: how to open the door for M. Poulot, how to bring him in, how to announce him.

MONSIEUR BOL. I do hope she won't make any breaks! Poulot is of course a man of breeding, a man of the world. We must seem as if we were used to receiving high-class people. Don't seem at all surprised. (*Proudly*) Let us be elegant, yet simple.

MADAME BOL. (*Nervously*) Yes,—but sit down, won't you? You've been standing up since dinner. You make me nervous.

MONSIEUR BOL. Sit down? Don't you see, I can't!

MADAME BOL. Why?

MONSIEUR BOL. Because of the crease!

MADAME BOL. The crease? What crease?

MONSIEUR BOL. The crease in my trousers! I had a hard enough time getting it, and I'm hanged if I spoil it now! Don't you see, I'm in evening dress? When a man's in evening dress, his trousers must be—impeccable!

MADAME BOL. Why, there was no use at all of your dressing up like that. This isn't a party. There'll be only three of us.

MONSIEUR BOL. That isn't the question. In London, all men put on evening clothes after six o'clock. Poulot will. I'll wager he is every night. Let's take a look at you. Turn around.

MADAME BOL. What do you want?

MONSIEUR BOL. I want to see your dress.

MADAME BOL. (*Turning around*) There, are you satisfied?

MONSIEUR BOL. (*Examining her dress*) Yes—that's not at all bad.

MADAME BOL. (*Turning round and facing him*) Well, it's the only one I've got.

MONSIEUR BOL. (*Quickly*) Of course! Of course! (*Examining her critically*) If I were in your place (*Descriptive gesture*) I'd build out a little there. (*Pointing to her back*)

MADAME BOL. Build out a little! You think you can give me advice on how to dress?! You—

MONSIEUR BOL. There, there! Don't get excited. When you get angry you turn red, and that makes you look common.

MADAME BOL. Oh, you,—! You make me tired! (*Calling*) Rosalie! Rosalie!

MONSIEUR BOL. Don't shout so loud! You'll get too excited.

MADAME BOL. Then *you* call her!

MONSIEUR BOL. What do you want with her?

MADAME BOL. I want to know whether everything is ready.

MONSIEUR BOL. (*Calling*) Rosalie! Rosalie! Stubborn girl! She hears me. (*Goes to door c. and opens it*) Rosalie! (*As he is at door c., enter ROSALIE left*)

— ROSALIE. Did Madame call?

MADAME BOL. I've been calling you for an hour; didn't you hear?

— ROSALIE. (*Calmly*) No, Madame.

MONSIEUR BOL. Are you deaf?

— ROSALIE. No, Monsieur.

MADAME BOL. Then why didn't you hear *me*?

— ROSALIE. I don't know.

MADAME BOL. (*Mimicking her*) I don't know! You never know anything! Why, someone might have rung the door-bell!

— ROSALIE. It isn't my fault.

MADAME BOL. (*Mimicking*) It isn't my fault!
(*Severely*) It's never your fault!

ROSALIE. Madame told me to close my kitchen door; that's why I didn't hear.

MADAME BOL. I told you to close your kitchen door because I didn't want the smell of grease to go all over the house. It's been two hours since dinner! You're a fool, my girl. Come! Take off that apron. (*ROSALIE takes off her apron and is about to throw it aside, when MADAME BOL cries out*) Don't do that! (*ROSALIE holds the apron in her hand*) Give it to Monsieur. (*MONSIEUR BOL rudely snatches the apron from ROSALIE and lays it on the chair*) There! (*Handing her a clean apron which he takes from the table*) There's a clean one! (*ROSALIE is about to take the apron, when MADAME BOL again cries out*) Don't touch it! You'll muss it. (*MADAME BOL takes the apron from her*)

MONSIEUR BOL. (*Taking the clean apron from MADAME BOL*) Hand it to me! (*He crosses behind ROSALIE and fastens the apron on her*) There! Now do everything as Madame Bol has told you. In a few minutes the bell will ring; it will be M. Poulot, a friend of ours—very rich. Do everything as you're told.

ROSALIE. M. Poulot?

MADAME BOL. Yes! As soon as you hear the bell you run to the door. M. Poulot will ask you: "Are Monsieur and Madame Bol at home?" And you will answer this way, smiling: "Yes, Monsieur."

— ROSALIE. And what if M. Poulot doesn't ask?

MADAME BOL. Goodness! What a fool!

MONSIEUR BOL. Good heavens, he *will* ask you! Hurry up, he'll be here in five minutes.

MADAME BOL. (*To ROSALIE*) Listen! As soon as you have said, "Yes, Monsieur," you—

ROSALIE. I know, Madame: I'll open the parlor door, and then go to the kitchen.

MADAME BOL. No, no, no—Gracious, no! Wait a moment, I'll show you what to do. (*To MONSIEUR BOL*) Here, Hippolyte, you be M. Poulot.

MONSIEUR BOL. There, Rosalie, stand there. (*He stations her before the sofa and pushes her down, aghast, to a sitting position*) Now look at us: I am M. Poulot—I ring—and Madame—you, that is—goes and opens the door for me. (*He picks up the apron from the chair, where he had laid it*) This is my overcoat. (*He goes to door center, opens it and goes out. Closes it and says*) Ding-a-ling-a-ling! (*MADAME BOL goes to door and opens it. MONSIEUR BOL appears and says, very ceremoniously*) "Are Monsieur and Madame Bol at home?"

MADAME BOL. (*In a declamatory tone*) Yes, Monsieur—will Monsieur take off his overcoat? Whom shall I announce, Monsieur?

MONSIEUR BOL. (*Emphatically*) Monsieur Poulot!

MADAME BOL. (*Going to ROSALIE*) Then you go to the parlor door, open it, and say: "Monsieur Poulot." (*MADAME BOL sweeps majestically down-stage; then, in her usual tone to ROSALIE*) M. Poulot enters and you close the door. You understand?

ROSALIE. Certainly.

MADAME BOL. Now, when I ring, it will be for tea.

ROSALIE. (*Rising—as if she did not understand*) For tea?

MADAME BOL. Yes, for tea! What is the matter with you to-day? You don't understand a word!

ROSALIE. Oh, yes, I do, Madame, only—

MADAME BOL. Only?

MONSIEUR BOL. Only what?

— ROSALIE. The tea-set isn't ready!

MADAME BOL. The tea-set isn't ready!?

MONSIEUR BOL. (To MADAME BOL—*furiously*)

Then everything was *not* ready!?

MADAME BOL. I suppose you couldn't get **it** ready, you goose?

— ROSALIE. I didn't have the keys!

MADAME BOL. Why couldn't you ask me? You ask me soon enough when it's to get sugar for your own tea! (She takes a bunch of keys from the mantel-piece and gives it to ROSALIE) There! Bring out the tea-things at once and come back right away. (ROSALIE goes out, left)

MONSIEUR BOL. You were a little to blame! You ought to have brought out the tea-things.

MADAME BOL. Oh, indeed! I've not had a single second since this morning. I've cleaned every bit of silver in the house. If that girl can't bring out four cups and saucers, I give up!

(Noise outside of broken china.)

MONSIEUR BOL. There! She's broken something.

MADAME BOL. (Calling) Rosalie!

(Enter ROSALIE.)

— ROSALIE. Madame, it was a cup!

MADAME BOL. Do you mean to tell me **you have** broken a cup?

MONSIEUR BOL. One of our best?

— ROSALIE. Yes, Monsieur.

MADAME BOL. How did you do it? It's impossible! Our best! You did it on purpose, you, you—! You'll pay for it—do you hear? You'll pay for it!

ROSALIE. It wasn't my fault; it just dropped.

MONSIEUR BOL. Yes—well, you'll pay for it all the same. (*Pointing to ROSALIE*) That girl dared ask me to raise her wages. (*To ROSALIE*) Raise your wages! Ha!

MADAME BOL. Hereafter you'll stay in on Sundays. (*ROSALIE begins to cry*) Stop that! Stop that! There's no use making yourself any homelier than you are! (*ROSALIE is about to wipe her eyes with her apron*) Don't!

MONSIEUR BOL. Haven't you a handkerchief, you little fool?

ROSALIE. (*Crying*) I left it—in—the kitchen.

MADAME BOL. Oh, you haven't the sense of a goose. I never in my life saw such stupidity!

MONSIEUR BOL. Think of paying wages for such a servant!

MADAME and MONSIEUR BOL. Fool! Idiot!

(*The door-bell rings. MONSIEUR and MADAME BOL cease their abuse at once. A pause.*)

MONSIEUR BOL. Sh! There's the bell!

MADAME BOL. (*Whispering*) It's Poulot. (*She goes to the mirror and arranges her hair*)

MONSIEUR BOL. (*To ROSALIE*) Quick! Go and open the door! And remember everything we told you. Go on! (*Seeing the apron on the chair*) Oh, the apron! (*He snatches it up and throws it into the desk drawer, then he comes back and finds ROSALIE in the same position as before*) Well?!

MADAME BOL. (*To ROSALIE*) What's the matter?

ROSALIE. (*With calm assurance*) I won't go.

MADAME BOL. You won't go?!

MONSIEUR BOL. Don't be a fool, Rosalie; the bell rang; go and open the door!

— ROSALIE. (*Calmly*) I won't go.

MONSIEUR BOL. (*Raging*) Oh, you won't go!
Well—?! It's Poulot—M. Poulot!

— ROSALIE. I won't go.

MADAME BOL. Why? (*To MONSIEUR BOL*)
You go and open the door.

MONSIEUR BOL. Like this? In my evening
clothes! The hall is dark; he might take me for a
servant!

MADAME BOL. Then I'll go! (*She goes toward
door center*)

MONSIEUR BOL. (*Bringing her back*) What
are you thinking of? That would spoil every-
thing: he'd think we haven't even a maid. (*To
ROSALIE*) Rosalie, we've had enough of your fool-
ing; go and open the door. For the second time, I
command you!

ROSALIE. No!

(*The bell rings again.*)

MONSIEUR BOL. There it is again! Do you hear?
M. Poulot is getting impatient! He'll go away!
Rosalie! In the name of all you hold sacred, go
and open the door!

ROSALIE. No!

MADAME BOL. But why not? Good heavens,
why not?

MONSIEUR BOL. (*To MADAME BOL*) Don't say
anything! (*To ROSALIE, with tears in his voice*)
Listen to me, Rosalie; there must be a reason; why
don't you go? Why do you put us in this emba-
rrassing position?

— ROSALIE. Why do you always scold me, then?
Why do you make me pay for a cup that just
slipped out of my fingers?

MONSIEUR BOL. Good! You needn't pay for

the cup. Are you satisfied? Now, go and open the door.

ROSALIE. No!

MADAME BOL. (To ROSALIE) The stubborn—!

MONSIEUR BOL. (To MADAME BOL) Shh! Don't! (To ROSALIE, *very sweetly*) I tell you, you don't have to pay for the cup—what more do you want? Ah, yes—you may go out Sundays. You may go out as soon as lunch is over; you may wash your dishes the day after: we'll dine at the café, Madame Bol and I, and you may have the whole day to yourself. Now, go and open the door. Rosalie, go and open the door!

ROSALIE. You may think it's fun for me to keep working on forever on thirty francs a month!

MONSIEUR BOL. I'll pay you forty!

ROSALIE. You say so—(*Bell rings twice*)

MONSIEUR BOL. (More and more excited) Oh, this is fearful! to keep him waiting like this! (To ROSALIE, *supplicating*) You'll get your raise. I'll give it to you at once. There's five francs. (Gives her a coin)

MADAME BOL. (To ROSALIE) Take it! (ROSALIE takes the coin)

MONSIEUR BOL. Now, hurry up!

ROSALIE. (Hesitating) Well—

MONSIEUR BOL. What! Is there something else?

ROSALIE. I don't want Madame to call me names any more.

MONSIEUR BOL. She won't call you names any more.

ROSALIE. "Idiot," "fool," "goose."

MONSIEUR BOL. Rosalie, she'll never do it again. (To MADAME BOL) Will you? Tell her you'll never do it again!

MADAME BOL. Of course.

MONSIEUR BOL. Now go, Rosalie.

ROSALIE. Even if I am only a maid, I have some dignity.

MONSIEUR BOL. What more do you want? Excuses? (ROSALIE nods "Yes.") I humbly beg your pardon.

ROSALIE. No, not you: Madame!

MONSIEUR BOL. (To MADAME BOL.) You hear?

MADAME BOL. Never!!

(Rapping heard at the door.)

MONSIEUR BOL. There he is knocking! He'll go away, I know he will! Oh! (To MADAME BOL) Beg her pardon! There's no harm in that.

MADAME BOL. Ha! Ha!

MONSIEUR BOL. (To MADAME BOL) You're worse than she is. If Poulot leaves, it will be your fault. Oh, Lord!

MADAME BOL. My fault!?

MONSIEUR BOL. (Threatening MADAME BOL) Whether it's your fault or not, beg her pardon, and let her open the door!

MADAME BOL. You know very well she won't go; she'll only ask for something else.

ROSALIE. No!

MONSIEUR BOL. You hear? When Rosalie says *no* she means *no!* Now!

MADAME BOL. (With a great effort) Rosalie—I beg your pardon—

MONSIEUR BOL. (To ROSALIE) Now, quick, quick!

ROSALIE. (Goes toward door center, then stops) Oh!

MONSIEUR. What is it *now*?

ROSALIE. Shall I say that you're here?

MONSIEUR BOL. Yes, certainly. Quick. (She

goes out) What a girl! I'll throw her out of the house.

MADAME BOL. I never saw anything like it! To make me beg her pardon!

MONSIEUR BOL. But it was necessary. You must be politic. Now sit down! Don't seem disturbed—Whew! (*Wiping perspiration from his face and neck*) What shall we say for having made him wait so long?

MADAME BOL. We'll tell him the bell was out of order.

MONSIEUR BOL. Sh! Here he is.

(MONSIEUR and MADAME BOL stand expectantly. MONSIEUR BOL is behind the chair, MADAME BOL behind the sofa. The center opens; enter ROSALIE.)

MONSIEUR BOL. (To ROSALIE) Well? Where is he?

ROSALIE. Who?

MADAME BOL. Monsieur Poulot—where is he?

ROSALIE. I don't know.

MONSIEUR BOL. You don't know? But, who rang the door-bell?

ROSALIE. How do I know? The man from upstairs! 'Rang the wrong bell.

(*Consternation--then*)

Curtain

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